

Grief

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that, according to Sister Roberta Rodenhouse, RSM. As many as 10 parishioners, including some in the church's Bereavement Support Ministry, attend funerals to support the families. Others take food to their homes.

Food is a common comfort, and Holy Rosary Parish's Caring and Sharing Group is adding a twist to a potluck supper after a memorial Mass Nov. 11 — it is asking survivors to bring a dish to pass that was the favorite of their loved one.

"So many just swallow the grief and don't want to talk about it," Sister Carole Proia, SSJ, group coordinator, said. But when the survivor is ready, the group is there for support.

"They've really formed a community," she said. "They care for one another."

Support groups are blossoming with ideas beyond discussion. St. Joseph's Church in Penfield has a long-standing Morninglory support group that schedules speakers, presents a panel of people who have grieved, holds book reviews, has a telephone network, compiles a newsletter, and keeps a library.

At Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in Rochester, the Mending Hearts support group generated a collateral group to

concentrate on spirituality. The newer Potpourri Group has read haiku and written their own poems, meditated on what their mothers' hands were like, listened to music, and gone on retreats.

"We try different ways," Sister Livia Ann Ruocco, RSM, coordinator, said. "It's more a spiritual journey. We are moving on to discover a new life after death."

Bereavement groups are emerging not only in parishes, but also on college campuses, in hospitals, and apparently even cemeteries. Father Peter Bayer has noticed that quasi support groups develop at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery in Rochester when mourners attend a memorial Mass.

"They form their own little group," Father Bayer said. "They meet at one another's graves, and bring coffee or go off and have coffee together."

At Cornell University, a bereavement support group for students and the community allows people a place to grieve openly, Father Richard Murphy, a Catholic chaplain there, said.

Especially in the university area, people seem to be expected to "be intellectual" but not feeling, he said; compassion for mourners lasts about two weeks.

At the meetings, he said, "We put a lot of boxes of Kleenex out on the table and talk. It's wonderful seeing people giving

support. We get people talking and don't have to do anything. At the end, they say, 'Oh, it felt so good to talk.'"

Father Murphy also does "postventions" for student gatherings after deaths.

"I try to get them both laughing and crying," he said. "I say, 'Tell me things you miss the most,' and 'What were funny things about the person.' It helps to see that laughter and tears are appropriate when a friend dies."

At Mt. Carmel House for the dying in Rochester, a bereavement committee follows up with families who lose someone.

The need for support extends beyond people who lose family members and friends. At St. Mary's Hospital in Rochester, oncology nurses began a monthly support group now open to other staff members, according to Father P. Frederick Helfrich, chaplain.

These groups — and others — organized to meet a perceived need of helping people face what may be the hardest times of their lives.

"You know the cliché, 'Time heals all wounds?'" Berretta observed. "It does not. It depends on what you do with that time. You never get over it. It becomes a part of your life that your loved one has died ... It does get better, though. If you use that time in a productive way, a healing way, it will help heal."

Listing

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Support Group, 7-9 p.m. first Wednesday of the month in the teacher's lounge of Rush-Henrietta Catholic School, 3288 E. Henrietta Road, Henrietta; potluck supper, 6:30 p.m. third Wednesday of the month at a group member's house. Coordinator is Sister Barb Stinard, RSM, pastoral associate, 334-3518.

Bereavement Ministry of St. Louis Church, 60 S. Main St., Pittsford, varying monthly meeting times (next one is 7:15 p.m. Nov. 15) in parish meeting room. Coordinator is Georgia Crissy, 383-1868, with Sr. Judith Kendrick, RSM, 586-5675.

Morninglory bereaved support group, **St. Joseph's Church**, 43 Gebhardt Road, Penfield, in parish resource center, at 7:30 p.m. third Thursday of the month. Coordinators are Sister Patricia Switzer, RSM, pastoral associate, Nancy Gullen, and Gloria Gonyeo, 586-0674.

Companions in Grief, **St. Rita's Church**, 1008 Maple Drive, Webster, in St. Rita's School faculty room, varying schedule but usually every six weeks. The next "Prayer and Share" meeting is at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 14. The group also meets with bereavement groups at Holy Trinity and St. Paul's churches in Webster. Coordinator is Sister Judy Whalen, SSJ, parish minister, 671-1653.

Morning Star, **Holy Trinity Church**, 1460 Ridge Road, Webster, in church Wing Room, usually 7 p.m. the first Wednesday of the month. Next meeting is 7 p.m. Dec. 6.

Coordinator is Judith Kiehl, pastoral associate, 265-2124.

DSB (Divorced/Separated/Bereaved) — 16 groups sponsored by **Finger Lakes Social Ministry** in Ontario, Wayne, Yates, Seneca, and Cayuga counties, meet monthly/weekly. Coordinator is Ann DeBolt, 315/789-2686.

Widows/Widowers Support Group, St. Mary's Church, 224 Franklin St., Elmira, schedule not set. Coordinator is Connie Bergh, 607/733-1084. Bergh also runs a weekly **Widows/Widowers Support Group** at St. Joseph's Hospital.

Corning-Painted Post Roman Catholic Community, Bereavement Group at St. Patrick's Church rectory, 274

Denison Parkway, Corning, at Tuesdays Dec. 5, Feb. 6, and March 26. Coordinator is Sister Edna Slyck, RSM, 607/936-4689 or 936-3790.

Cornell University, Ithaca, Bereavement Support Group 2-3:30 p.m. Wednesdays in Room 314, Anabel Taylor Hall. Coordinators Father Richard Murphy, Catholic chaplain, 607/255-1078, and the Rev. Janet Shortall, Cornell United Religious Work, 607/255-6003.

Annual memorial Masses are planned at some churches. **Holy Sepulchre Cemetery**, 2461 Lake Ave., Rochester, schedules one for 8:30 a.m. the third Saturday of every month in All Saints Chapel (in winter).

Thoughts to Consider



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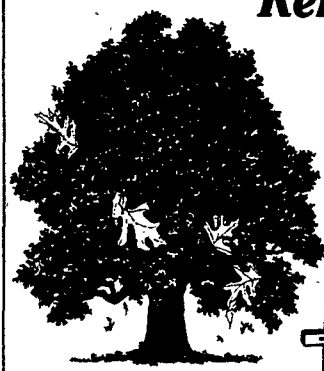
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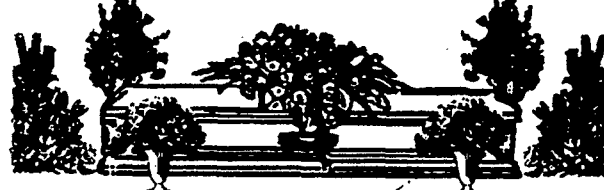
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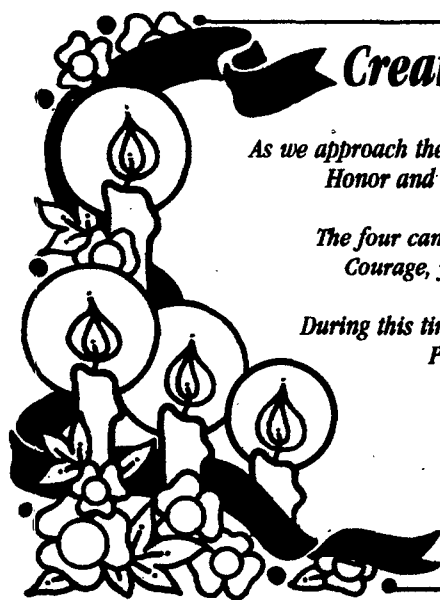
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